

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims includes all of the pending claims, and supersedes all prior listings, and versions, of claims in this application.

Claims 1-27 (Cancelled).

28. (Currently Amended) A shift lever mechanism comprising:
a housing;
a lever having a longitudinal axis, said lever being at least partially disposed within said housing;
a pivoting member in operational communication with said lever being adapted to facilitate pivoting of said lever into a plurality of positions; and
a biasing member disposed proximate said lever, said biasing member includes a first element and a second element adapted to be displaceable in a direction substantially parallel to said longitudinal axis of said lever, a third element being adapted to be fixed relative to said lever, and a biasing element disposed intermediate said second element and said third element, said biasing member selectively applying a biasing force to said lever moving said lever into at least one biased position.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member ~~further comprises a biasing means~~ is operable to bias said lever into at least one biased neutral position.

31. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member is disposed on said lever coaxially therewith.

32. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member operates in a generally non-transverse direction relative to said longitudinal axis of said lever.
33. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member ~~selectively~~ applies a biasing force operable to oppose displacement of said lever in any direction.
34. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said housing includes a longitudinal axis, said applied biasing force is generally in a direction of said longitudinal axis of said housing.
35. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein in a biased position, said longitudinal axis of said lever is generally parallel to a direction of said biasing force.
36. (Cancelled)
37. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim [[36]]28, wherein said lever extends through said first element, said second element, said third element, and said biasing element from a generally coaxial arrangement therewith.
38. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim [[36]]28, wherein said biasing element is a spring.
39. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim [[36]]28, wherein said first element is adapted to engage with a stop means.
40. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 39, wherein said stop means is operable to prevent pivotal displacement of said first element in at least one direction.

41. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 39, wherein said stop means is disposed on an inner wall of said housing.
42. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 41, wherein said stop means includes a region of reduced diameter of said inner wall.
43. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 39, wherein said stop means is disposed on said lever.
44. (Cancelled)
45. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, further comprising a second biasing member.
46. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 45, wherein said second biasing member is substantially the same as said biasing member.
47. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim 45, A shift lever mechanism comprising:
a housing;
a lever having a longitudinal axis, said lever being at least partially disposed within said housing;
a pivoting member in operational communication with said lever being adapted to facilitate pivoting of said lever into a plurality of positions;
a biasing member disposed proximate said lever, said biasing member applying a biasing force to said lever moving said lever into at least one biased position; and
a second biasing member, wherein said pivoting member is disposed on said lever between said biasing member and said second biasing member.
48. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said pivoting member further comprises a spherical element.

49. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element is disposed in a retaining cup and is operable to pivotally move therein.
50. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element is fixed to said lever thereby forming a pivot point on said lever.
51. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element is fixed to said lever by a retaining pin.
52. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element forms an integral part of said lever thereby forming a pivot point on said lever.
53. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said lever extends through said spherical element to form an arrangement generally coaxial therewith.
54. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element is formed from a plastic or a metallic material composition.
55. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said pivoting member further comprises a plurality of pins adapted to engage with each other to form a pivotable arrangement.
56. (Currently Amended) A shift lever mechanism comprising:
a housing having a housing longitudinal axis;
a retaining cup disposed within said housing;
a lever having a first end, a second end, and a lever longitudinal axis, said lever being at least partially disposed within said housing;
a pivoting member disposed in said retaining cup and being in operational communication with said lever, said pivoting member being adapted to facilitate pivoting of said lever into a plurality of positions; and
a biasing member disposed proximate said lever, said biasing member includes a first element and a second element adapted to be displaceable in a direction substantially

parallel to said longitudinal axis of said lever, a third element being adapted to be fixed relative to said lever, and a biasing element disposed intermediate said second element and said third element, said biasing member selectively applying a biasing force to said lever moving said lever into at least one predetermined position.

57. (Cancelled)
58. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim [[57]]56, wherein said lever extends through said first element, said second element, said third element, and said biasing element from a generally coaxial arrangement therewith.
59. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim [[57]]56, wherein said first element is adapted to engage with a stop member.
60. (Currently Amended) The shift lever mechanism of claim 59, wherein said stop member [[is]] prevents pivotal displacement of said first element in at least one direction.
61. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 59, wherein said stop member is disposed on an inner wall of said housing.
62. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 59, wherein said stop member is in operational communication with said lever.
63. (Previously Presented) The shift lever mechanism of claim 56, wherein said pivoting member further comprises a plurality of pins selectively engaging each other to form a pivotable arrangement.
64. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said second element engages said first element and slideably engages said lever, and said third element is fixedly attached to said lever for concurrent movement therewith.

65. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 64, wherein said second element is displaced axially along a longitudinal length of said lever when said lever is displaced from said at least one biased position.
66. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 64, wherein said biasing element exerts a biasing force against said first and third elements urging the two elements away from one another.
67. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 64, wherein said second element selectively engages said third element.
68. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 56, wherein said second element slideably engages said lever and said biasing member applies a biasing force to said second element urging said second element into contact with said first element.